

THE BEACON

FOR SCHOOL AND HOME

VOLUME X. No. 12

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From painting by Adolf Grass.

THE NATIVITY.

Christmas.

BY ANNA N. REED.

ON Christmas came the greatest Gift of all,
And so, whatever gift we choose to send
On this his day, to relative or friend,
However poor it be, however small,
Must bear the spirit that the Christ Child brought,
The blessed Christmas spirit,—or 'tis naught!

Lewis's Christmas.

BY BAYARD D. YORK.

ON the first Saturday of December Lewis Nelson worked for Mr. Burr—washing windows, sifting ashes, and doing some other odd jobs around the house. Mr. Burr was the principal of the high school in which Lewis was a freshman.

As Lewis was leaving at four o'clock, Mr. Burr remarked,

"You ought to have a bicycle."

"I'm going to—when Christmas comes," Lewis replied.

"Good!" exclaimed the principal; then with a smile he added, "Christmas is a great institution, isn't it?"

"You bet!" Lewis agreed.

As the boy walked homeward he repeated to himself two or three times—Christmas, bicycle; bicycle, Christmas. It sounded good either way!

He was going to have a real bicycle of

his own. His mother and he had talked it all over, and they had decided that they could each lay aside a dollar a week for the purchase of it—Lewis from what he received for delivering the morning paper and for doing odd jobs such as Mr. Burr had given him, his mother from the wages paid her for cleaning house, washing, and ironing for various ladies in the village.

Lewis had not told his mother that he was also saving ten cents a week to buy her a present with; nor had she told him that she was putting away a dime or a nickel at every opportunity toward some little surprise for him.

Each of them might have guessed this—for it had always been the way in the Nelson home. In those happy days before Mr. Nelson had died, the surprises of Christmas morning had been large and wonderful; now, when every penny counted toward the paying of the grocer and the landlord, the gifts were of necessity small.

As Lewis turned in at the gate of his home his step quickened. He must open up the furnace and get the house warm before his mother came in from her work at Mrs. Rowley's.

To his surprise he found that his mother was already home. She had taken off her hat, but she still wore her heavy coat.

"Mrs. Rowley's house must have been cold, I think," she said, with a tired little smile. "I had a bit of a chill—nothing to worry about. I'll be all right as soon as the house is warm and I've had a cup of hot tea."

Lewis hurried to the kitchen and lighted the gas under a kettle of water; then he ran to the cellar and opened the furnace drafts. He was back in a minute, prepared to make the tea as soon as the water boiled.

Five minutes later, as Mrs. Nelson held her cup of hot tea with an unsteady hand, she said that she would surely be all right in the morning. But when morning came she was worse; and the doctor who was called in said rather solemnly, Lewis thought, that he would come again that evening.

For more than a week Mrs. Nelson remained in bed. Lewis had to give up his odd jobs and help take care of things around the house, for good Mrs. Linton who came in and did the cooking was not able to do more than that.

At length Mrs. Nelson was able to sit up a little.

"I must get out to work again," she said one day.

But Lewis shook his head decidedly.

"You will not work any more until next month," he said.

"But I must!" she cried. "We need the money."

Lewis had rehearsed in his mind several times what he was going to say when this problem came up.

"We'll get along," he said stoutly. "I've some twelve dollars saved up, and I know that you have some too—we'll use that money. We can get along all right."

"You mean our Christmas money—oh, we mustn't use that!" Mrs. Nelson exclaimed. "Why—then you wouldn't have any Christmas, Lewis."

"Well, it might be worse," said the boy, slowly. "I've been reading about the kind of Christmas they will have over in France this year—it says that if two people of the same family can get together under some sort of a patched-up roof in a place they can call home, that they will consider that a happy Christmas. Don't worry about me, mother."

The day before Christmas was one of those chilly, gray days that seem to say that the sunshine has gone out of the world. As Lewis was walking home from the store where he had been buying the groceries for the next day he met Mr. Burr.

"Mother is much better," he said in answer to the man's question. "She will be out again soon now."

"I'm glad," said the principal. "Well—a Merry Christmas to you both. Still looking for that bicycle?"

Lewis squared his shoulders a bit.

"No," he said. "You see, with doctor's bills and mother not working and everything, I've given up the bicycle. We aren't going to have any Christmas this year."

The principal was also assistant superintendent in the Sunday school which Lewis attended.

"That's too bad," he said. "Well, come to the exercises to-morrow evening and we'll try to give you a little Christmas."

"I can't," said Lewis. "You see, when I go out, it leaves mother alone—and she gets lonesome, especially evenings."

The principal turned abruptly.

"I'll walk a block or two with you," he said. "There's something I want to say."

He fell into step with Lewis.

"That expression you used a minute ago, 'We aren't going to have any Christmas this year,' is a queer one. I've heard many people say it, first and last—and I always wonder if they realize what it means. It would be a tragic thing if we really weren't going to have any Christmas this year—it would mean the turning back of history for two thousand years and the uprooting of most of our civilization. We don't mean that, of course; but"—

He turned to the boy earnestly.

"Here's what we do that's all wrong," he said. "We give presents and receive them—and we point to those presents and say, 'This is Christmas!' We really know better—but we do it just the same. Now you would like to come to the Christmas tree to-morrow evening, but you are going to give it up and stay with your mother to keep her from being lonesome. And yet you tell me that you aren't going to have any Christmas this year! If there's any family that's got more Christmas than that, I'd like to see it. My boy, I know homes where the presents will be piled to the ceiling and yet there will be no real Christmas there! Presents don't make Christmas. But you can point to the spirit of love and thoughtfulness and say, 'This is Christmas!' I wonder if people will ever learn that!"

"Seems as if they ought to," Lewis murmured.

The principal smiled. He knew Lewis's weakness in the world of studies.

"Maybe it's a hard lesson to learn—something like algebra," he said.

Lewis walked on slowly. Of course the principal was right—Christmas was not in the gifts one gave or received; it was in the spirit of the day.

And yet—well, that was cold comfort for a boy who wanted a bicycle!

It was late on Christmas morning before either Lewis or his mother got up; and as a result breakfast was very late.

Just as everything was on the table, Lewis appeared from the kitchen with a large grapefruit in his hand.

"I heard you tell Mrs. Linton that nothing tasted so good as a grapefruit," he said, "and I bought three—I don't care if we do go to the poorhouse for it."

"You shouldn't have done it," his mother said—but he had seen the quick look of appreciation in her eyes.

As he sat down at the table his hand fell upon a small paper package which he had not noticed before.

"It isn't anything," his mother hastened to say. "But you needed a new tie—and I felt that we must have some token of Christmas."

As Lewis was undoing the tie, there was a rap at the back door; and answering it, he found Mr. Burr there.

"I'll come in just for a minute," Mr. Burr said. "There's a caller at your front door too, I think."

"I didn't hear the bell," Lewis remarked; and hurried to the other door.

A minute later he returned, a questioning look on his face.

"Bring it in," said the principal. "It's come to stay—if you want it."

If he wanted it! Lewis took one leap back toward the door—and in a moment returned, rolling a bicycle before him.

"I ought to have thought of it before," the principal said. "It's one I have used a little—though only a little, and I think that with those new tires it is as good as new. I found it hurt my back—I imagine it was too small for me, anyway."

"But we—I don't think Lewis ought to accept such a gift from you, Mr. Burr," Mrs. Nelson said.

"It isn't a gift," Mr. Burr answered. "Or if it is, I have received a lot in return for it. In a world where the spirit of Christmas is so rare, Lewis has paid me well for the bicycle, never fear."

And not quite understanding all of that, but accepting it, Lewis suddenly jumped onto the bicycle and began to ride around the room—knocking over two chairs on his way.

"Hurrah!" he shouted. "Merry Christmas!"



When Christmas Comes.

WHEN Christmas comes, I never mind the cold.

I like to get up prompt an' go to school,
An' do my sums,
An' clean the walks 'thout waitin' to be told—

Though I like sleddin' better, as a rule,
Or buildin' forts— But nothin' ain't so bad,

When Christmas comes.

When Christmas comes, I'd just as lief give half

My cooky to the baby, an' take care
About the crumbs.

It's fun to make the little fellow laugh.
An' I don't mind his taggin' ev'rywhere.

He can't help bein' little! I'm not mad
When Christmas comes.

When Christmas comes, I don't forget to give

My shoes a wipe, an' scrub my ears a lot
Till my head hums.

An' Mother says, "That boy's too good to live!"

But I'm not 'fraid of dyin', 'cause I'm not

No different from always—only glad
When Christmas comes!

ABIGAIL WILLIAMS BURTON,
in St. Nicholas.



Choosing for Santa Claus.

BY EULETA WADSWORTH.

ELIZABETH, of course, grew a year older and a year taller every twelve months, but she remained the same sweet, unselfish Elizabeth with the same quaint ideas. You remember her idea of giving the Burger children something so they would have reason to be thankful on Thanksgiving; and how she fixed little boxes of goodies to give to friendless old Mr. Dixon, and to Luella whose mother had been sick so long, "just so," she said, "they won't forget it's the day to be thankful." Now this year away back as early as Easter-time she got another quaint idea. Not for Thanksgiving this time, but for Christmas.

"Mother," she called from upstairs where she had gone to get her mending-basket on a Saturday morning, "I'm glad I'm old enough to mend, and I'm glad I've got a bachelor Uncle Joe who pays me to do his mending."

"What's in your head now?" laughed Mrs. Fenton, knowing well that Elizabeth was forming one of her schemes.

"I'll tell you as soon as I come down," called Elizabeth.

Mrs. Fenton went on about her work, smiling. "It's too bad," she thought, "that Elizabeth hasn't a little more money with which to work out her ideas, for she surely has good ones. I don't know where the child picks them up." Mrs. Fenton shook the wrinkles out of the curtains which had been pinned up while she was sweeping. "After all, though," she mused, "perhaps it's just as well. It isn't always the amount of money one spends which brings happiness; it's the way, the kindly, loving way, one spends it."

"You see, mother," said Elizabeth, breathlessly, coming in from the hall, "I was just thinking what a grand time old Santa must have selecting presents for all the children. Do you remember that year when you let me choose the presents to send to Aunt Ida's children? I never had more fun in my life. It's so exciting to see a whole shopful of presents and know you can choose something from the hundreds of lovely things."

"Yes," said Mrs. Fenton, wondering what was in Elizabeth's mind, "it is lots of fun to choose. I remember when your papa and I chose the first things for our house. We had only seventy-five dollars, and we couldn't get much; but the few little cheap things we selected seemed nicer to me than my wedding presents which were chosen for me and cost ever so much more."

"Yes, yes, mother, that's exactly what I think. So I'm going to save the money I earn mending Uncle Joe's socks, and the night before Christmas I'm going down town and stand by the biggest toy window. And when poor little tads come along that look as though all they could have of Christmas was what they could see through the glass, I'm going to give them some money and tell them to go inside and choose something." Elizabeth laughed delightedly when she thought of the fun it would be for the children.

"Of course," she said, "they'll select the most foolish things probably, things that will be broken before they get home; but they'll have the joy of picking them out. No wonder Santa Claus is fat and

happy looking. Just think of the fun he has choosing. Well, I want my little tads to have some of that fun. I'll tell them it's helping Santa by choosing for him."

Elizabeth was far too serious-minded to let her happy idea grow cold just because Christmas was so far away. Each week she put the money her Uncle Joe paid her in her bank, and several times her brother Phillip dropped in some loose change, for he was earning money regularly on his paper route and sometimes felt quite rich. And when Uncle Joe heard what she was doing, he insisted on dropping in extra bits each time he paid Elizabeth for the mending, so by the time Thanksgiving came the bank was stuffed almost too full to jingle. Elizabeth had been so intent on her choosing idea the last week, she had scarcely given a thought to what she would like for her own Christmas. In fact, when her mother had asked her one evening, at Uncle Joe's suggestion, what she would choose for herself if she could, she was so intent on counting the pennies and nickels and dimes which were heaped in her lap from the bank that she said absent-mindedly something about a white set for her bedroom, which she knew of course was far too expensive to even hope for. Then she said quickly to cover up her blunder: "Oh! I didn't think what I was saying. I'd like a book and—and a bow for my hair and—oh! I'll like anything if I can just have the fun of choosing it."

Every one laughed. "Elizabeth has choosing on the brain," teased Uncle Joe. But he gave Elizabeth a look, which she didn't see, that denoted he was very proud of her.

It was Uncle Joe who went with Elizabeth Christmas Eve to stand by the toy-shop windows and watch for the hungry-eyed little children. "I wonder," said Elizabeth with her heart in her throat, "who'll be the first one we'll send inside?" As if in answer to her question two little boys all alone stopped and flattened their noses against the glass. Elizabeth had been wondering how she could tell which children were the ones she wanted to give the money to, but she didn't need a second look at these two little fellows to know that already she had found two of the ones she sought. They looked at her as if they couldn't believe their ears when she counted out some pennies and dimes and told them to go inside and choose. "Me?" said one. "And Jack, too?" Their eyes fairly stuck out with happiness as they made for the door. Elizabeth watched for them to come out. One was clutching a little tin automobile, the other one had a horn in one hand and a bag of candy in the other. They looked as though Santa had left them a whole sleighful of presents.

In the mean time Elizabeth had sent in a little boy and girl who had stopped at the window with their mother. From their conversation she learned they were not going to have any presents, and she could scarcely count out the nickels quickly enough. "My, I'm having more fun than anybody out of this, Uncle Joe. I'm beginning to feel selfish."

"Don't worry," said her uncle. "Did you see that child's face who had on the old coat four sizes too large for her? What do you suppose she'll choose?"

"She was the one who thanked me so



By Dr. W. G. Parker.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

many times," said Elizabeth. "She was so excited I don't believe she knew what she was saying."

"Did the tall boy who came back and asked if you cared if he got two things with his money come out yet?"

"I haven't seen him," answered Elizabeth. "He was the one who said he wanted to get something for his little sister, and I gave him three extra dimes. Did you see his—his"—Elizabeth's eyes filled suddenly with tears. "Uncle Joe, his coat sleeves"—She couldn't get any farther.

"Hey! hey!" said Uncle Joe. "What's this? I thought you were so happy?"

"I am," gulped Elizabeth, smiling through her tears, "but his sleeves,—they"—

"Tut! tut! that's enough. I'll take you home in a minute. There's somebody you'd better be looking at."

Elizabeth wheeled around and saw a cheery-looking little fellow with a cute turned-up nose, grinning from ear to ear. His sagging old red sweater couldn't have been more ragged and stayed on him, but that didn't seem to be bothering him in the least. "Say, Micky," he called to another small boy who had stopped to look

through the door, "here's the bat I was telling you about. Ain't she a Joe-dandy? If I owned her I could knock a ball from here to the skating-rink." And he went gleefully through the motion of doing that very thing.

"You won't get a chance to bat a ball with that bat," said Micky. "I wish I had a baseball. I could pitch as good a curve as the League fellows if I had a ball to practice with." His big brown eyes looked wistfully through the prohibiting wall of glass.

"Aw, such things are for kids, anyhow," said the other boy; but in spite of his brave words his mouth drooped longingly.

"O Uncle Joe, how much does a ball and bat cost?"

"About fifty cents for the bat and twenty-five for the ball."

"I've got just seventy-five cents left. I've a notion to give it to them. But if some one else should come"—

"Go ahead," said Uncle Joe. "I've some small change."

"It's a lot to give to one, but the little fellow is such a game little dear. I want him to have that bat." Elizabeth divided the money and told the boys to go in and



THE BEACON CLUB

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Writing a letter for this corner makes you a member of the Beacon Club. Address, The Beacon Club, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

4156 DALTON AVENUE,
LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

Dear Miss Buck,—I would like to be a member of the Beacon Club and wear its button. The enrollment of our Sunday school averages between forty and fifty, officers and teachers about nine.

On Friday after Thanksgiving we will give a county fair.

Yours truly,

GRETCHEN LYON.

68 LANCASTER STREET,
LEOMINSTER, MASS.

Dear Miss Buck,—I belong to the Unitarian Sunday school. I go every Sunday. My teacher is Mrs. Mayo; our minister is Rev. Benjamin Bulkeley. I am twelve years old. I subscribe for *The Beacon* every year.

I would like to join the Beacon Club and wear the button.

Yours truly,

RAYMOND A. CRAGIN.

choose what they would like best. The little fellow with the turned-up nose looked ready to burst with joy.

"It won't take me long," he said, looking at the handful of dimes and pennies. "Thank you," he beamed; and then, seeing that Micky was too dumfounded with joy and surprise to speak, he added: "Thank you for Mick, too. He'll wake up after a while."

Uncle Joe looked at his watch. It was getting late for children to be out, but they waited until they saw the little fellow come out with the bat slung across his shoulder, proudly followed by Micky smiling at the ball in his hand. And then, as no other children had appeared, Uncle Joe said: "I want you to help me choose something before we go home. It's for a young lady, and I can't trust my judgment alone."

"Oh, I'll just love to, Uncle Joe; you know what I think of choosing," smiled Elizabeth.

So they walked up the street. "I don't think there are any gift-shops up this way," said Elizabeth, at last, wondering what kind of a present Uncle Joe was thinking of getting for the young lady.

"Why, yes, I think I can get what I want just around the corner."

"I guess you must be mistaken, Uncle Joe. You must be thinking of Carlyle's. That's back a block. There's nothing around this corner but Bolton's furniture store. It takes up the whole block. Don't you remember?"

But Uncle Joe kept right on, and the first thing Elizabeth knew they were going up in the lift to Bolton's second floor. "What a funny place to buy a present for a young lady," thought Elizabeth, but she didn't say anything because Uncle Joe had seemed kind of stubborn and bent on coming here. On the second floor Uncle Joe said to a salesman:

"This young lady is a great believer in the joy of choosing. So I've brought her here to choose a white enameled bedroom set for a very sweet and unselfish young person whom I know."

404 WEST MAIN STREET,
HOPEDALE, MASS.

Dear Miss Buck,—I go to the Unitarian church of Hopedale. Our minister's name is Rev. Charles F. Niles. I like very much to work out the puzzles and read the stories of *The Beacon*. I would like to join the Beacon Club and wear a button on my coat. I am nine years old and in the fifth grade at school.

Sincerely yours,

BERYL ROGERS.

PEPPERELL, MASS.

Dear Miss Buck,—I go to the Community Church of Pepperell. We have a nice large Sunday school, and all the little children are enjoying *The Beacon*. I like to make out the puzzles and the enigmas. To-day mother said, "Try and see if you can make out some of the enigmas," but instead I thought I would try and make some myself. So I am sending you this one that I did all myself. I am eleven years old.

With love, from,

KATHERINE MALTMAN.

Elizabeth's face burned with sudden red fire and then got suddenly pale. For a moment she couldn't speak because she was afraid she was going to cry when she wanted to laugh. "O Uncle Joe!" she said when she could find her voice, "you are the best uncle in the world. But it will cost such a lot. Let me choose something else."

"There is nothing too good for a girl who thinks so little about her own Christmas and so much about other people's," said Uncle Joe, and he gave her arm an affectionate squeeze and led her over to where there was a bewildering variety of beautiful enameled sets. And Elizabeth's eyes were as starry as any child's to whom she had herself given the joy of choosing earlier in the evening.

Carol Joyfully.

BY THE EDITOR.

IN England, groups of children and young people, trained in the churches to sing the Christmas music, go about the streets of their home town on Christmas Eve, singing carols before each house. The weather is more favorable in the "tight little island" to that pleasing custom than in many parts of our great continent, though people sometimes observe it here in suitable seasons.

We may make our Christmas music part of our spirit of giving at that happy season, even if we do not sing in the streets. Songs in the home may be part of the children's gift to the family and friends. We may sing in church and the church school, making melody in our hearts unto the Lord. We may keep in mind and remind others in this way of the real Christmas message, and rejoice that the spirit of the Love which gives for joy of giving was born into the world many centuries ago to be the leader of our faith, the pattern for our lives.

Carol joyfully, *Beacon* readers all, and so help make Merry Christmas.

RECREATION CORNER.

ENIGMA XXIII.

I am composed of 32 letters.
My 1, 2, 18, 32, is positive, certain.
My 23, 12, 7, 11, is a place for prisoners.
My 13, 24, 3, 4, 19, 26, is a drink.
My 9, 15, 10, 16, 5, is the name of any book or writing.
My 28, 30, 21, is a negative.
My 31, 22, 20, 27, 25, 5, 20, 29, is a stone memorial.
My 6, 8, 17, is to drive out, to clear away.
My 14, 2, 18, 21, is to damage, to injure.
My whole is a saying of Jesus.

ENIGMA XXIV.

I am composed of 10 letters.
My 4, 3, 6, 2, is what old men use.
My 1, 5, 10, is a boy's nickname.
My 7, 8, 9, 2, is a helpful hint.
My whole is something we all are anxious to join.

KATHERINE MALTMAN.

HIDDEN BIBLE CITIES AND TOWNS.

1. I will not live as hermits do.
2. You must be real good.
3. We did not give Elizabeth any candy.
4. Can a dog climb a tree? No.
5. She gathers wild flowers.
6. This is for sale, madam.
7. They built for them mausoleums.
8. I can give twenty reasons for it.
9. As I donned my coat, he came.
10. Put the banana in your desk.

E. A. C.

A SEARCH FOR "PENS."

Discover these words, each of which begins or ends with the syllable "pen":

- (1) Feathery; (2) easy of access; (3) a large web-footed seabird; (4) to make darker or more intense; (5) a small flag; (6) undecided; (7) thoughtful or sad; (8) a Jewish festival; (9) a decided taste; (10) a species of the poplar tree; (11) punishment for offence; (12) absence of means or resources.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN NO. 10.

ENIGMA XIX.—Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge.

ENIGMA XX.—Connecticut.

ARRANGING THE DIGITS.—

2	9	4
7	5	3
6	1	8

TWISTED RIVERS.—1. Mississippi. 2. Missouri. 3. Rio Grande. 4. Colorado. 5. Ohio. 6. Columbia. 7. Snake. 8. Connecticut. 9. Delaware. 10. Penobscot.

THE BEACON

REV. FLORENCE BUCK, EDITOR

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